

As requested, nonelected claims 13-15 have been cancelled.

Regarding the IDS filed June 25, 1998, Applicant respectfully requests that the art submitted be considered and that the 1449 form be initialed to reflect consideration of these references. Applicant's records reflect that and legible complete copies of the art were submitted. If an item or items were not received at the file room as complete or legible, Applicant requests that such item(s) be identified.

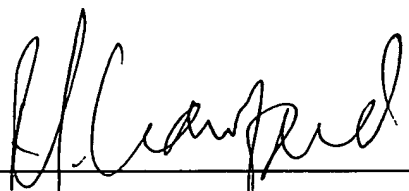
The above amendment to the specification should overcome the objection made at paragraph 7 of the Office Action.

With respect to the §§102(e) and §103 rejections, please find attached an affidavit consistent with 37 C.F.R. §1.131, which establishes that the invention of claims 1-12 and the alleged information disclosed by way of the '280 patent was invented by the inventors of the instant application. Thus, these prior art rejections should be removed.

In view of the above, Applicant submits that each of the claims has been patentably distinguished from the prior art. It is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections, along with a favorable response, are earnestly requested.

Should there be any remaining issues that could be readily addressed over the telephone, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at 612/349-2701.

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